

WSJV - Elkhart, Indiana

WSJV's commitment to local news is the very core of the station's identity. WSJV increased its local news from eleven hours to sixteen hours per week when it switched from ABC to Fox in 1995. Last fall the station added a third hour to its weekday morning news and added a new weekday half hour program at 5:30 PM, bringing the stations local news to 23.5 hours a week.

Without a national network news show, all of WSJV's newscasts contain national and international elements, but local content out ranks the remainder two to one.

LOCAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

We offer many opportunities for guests and interviews during our three-hour weekday morning newscast for local public affairs, politics, community activities and similar issues.

The show format has four to five built-in segments for these types of live-interviews. Each segment usually lasts three to four minutes. During these segments, we discuss the local events and issues. We also discuss how viewers can get involved to help - or to support the event or issue. During the past few weeks, we've dedicated these segments to issues such as: fundraising event for the American Cancer Society, raising money for area animal shelters, a women's health fair, weekend events, and the Catholic Peace Fellowship event where soldiers spoke about war and helped those who never served understand what war is like from a soldier's perspective.

We also have regular segments each week with an area doctor and vet. These segments hit once a week and last approximately five minutes. During these segments, we accept telephone calls and questions from viewers.

The station ascertains all guests to the studio in an effort of identifying the issues most important to the community.

Outside of news programs, WSJV sponsors many local community projects: The MDA Telethon, The South Bend Center for the Homeless, American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, The Salvation Army Adopt a Family program, etc. 2003 records indicate WSJV helped these organizations raise nearly \$2,400,000 and the station aired 9400 PSA's with a value of \$285.970.

For nine years, WSJV, and the other South Bend area television stations, jointly produce a half hour program about the South Bend Homeless Center and air the show as a roadblock on the third Saturday in December.

POLITICAL PROGRAMMING

During the current election season, our station made a commitment to the election process. This commitment, called "Election 2004," incorporated many elements - all with the ultimate goal of informing local voters and getting them to vote November 2nd.

We offered all the candidates in our major races opportunities to join us for live interviews and "mini-debates" during our newscasts. These opportunities also included an offer of "free time" for the candidates to say whatever they wanted to say - without our involvement. We offered the candidates in these

faces the same opportunity: US Senate (IN), US Congress Dist. 2 & 3 (IN), US Congress Dist. 6 (MI), Governor (IN).

Candidates in three of those races accepted: Chris Chocoma and Joe Donnelly - US Congress Dist. 2, Marvin Scott - US Senate (IN), and Fred Upton and Scott Elliott - US Congress Dist. 6 (MI). No other candidate accepted our offer.

In the past six weeks, we have dedicated enormous amounts of time to the fall elections. The latest tally shows we've dedicated more than 90 minutes to covering local candidates and issues, and 150 minutes to national races and issues. This includes five minutes of completely "free time" for local candidates to use without our involvement or interference.

This coverage includes local campaign stops and interviews, local issues on ballots, topics related to absentee voting and polling place changes, and efforts to get disabled voters to the polls to participate in the election.

We also launched a public service effort - again to drive involvement and get people to the polls on November 2nd. We produced 16 different announcements urging our viewers to get out and vote and to learn all they can to make an informed decision. These spots ranged from a few seconds in station IDs to more detailed 15 and 30-second spots. They played in all day-parts throughout the day. These PSA's premiered mid-September and have aired more than 600 times through Election Day.

WSJV added an election area on its web site providing links to all local and national candidates' sites providing easy access for viewers to find the political information they may desire.

CIVIC, CULTURAL & OTHER COMMUNITY-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Our news coverage of such issues included many events. With the recent news about the lack of flu vaccine, we informed people about the issue - who could get them, who could not. We also informed viewers of opportunities to get flu shots if you were in the groups eligible to receive the vaccine.

We dedicate much of our sports coverage to local teams and athletes. Our sportscasts typically run about five minutes a night. Within those sportscasts, we look to do more than just report scores from games. We introduce viewers to the athletes who make a difference, or excel within their community - not just on the field. Our "Sports Extra" broadcast - every Friday night from August through March - is dedicated to High School football and basketball in our area and runs about 30-minutes each week.

As a result of station's local sports coverage, the WSJV sports director was presented the Distinguished Media Service Award from the Indiana High School Athletic Association in 2003 and is the only commercial television broadcaster to have ever received this honor.

Our commitment to our community also includes special events and openings. When a new director was named at the Center for the Homeless, we were the first area news department to sit down and talk with him about his goal and vision for the Center's future. We also regularly report on new exhibits and efforts at area historical societies and museums. We will often bring the spokespeople on for a live interview, as well as taping stories at their locations.

We also work closely with area fire and police departments. We follow their fire safety training "smoke house" to schools and other events. We recently did a number of stories with the St. Joseph County Sheriff on stranger danger. Their officers took their demonstration to neighborhoods and schools around the area. Their program shows kids and parents how quickly abduction can occur - and who to protect yourself and your child.

Recently, we also did many stories on Halloween safety. The topics looked at costumes, candy, street smarts. This serves as a reminder for kids and parents, as well as others who will be out on Halloween.

As a part of that, we also focused on a display an area family put up - showing a wrecked car and "casualties." This was an effort to make everyone think about the dangers of drinking and driving. We work with police on campaigns for drinking and driving, speeding, school zone enforcement - whenever these issues are topical. They know they can rely on us to get the message out.

We also work closely with TRIAD - a local group which deals mostly with senior citizen-related issues. One of those examples would be their 'old medicine' drop-offs. They periodically set up drop offs for people to turn in their expired prescription medicines. This allows for safe and environmentally friendly disposal of old meds. We promote the events in advance and do live shots from their locations, reminding people and showing what to do.

MUSIC

We often have local artists on our morning news to perform and talk about future events and performances. Recently, we had the conductor from the South Bend Symphony on to talk about their fall schedule and 'Pops' concert.

Most often, the music we have involved area schools and their plays or concerts. We will have a few representatives on to talk about the event, and then feature a short production piece of the play or musical.

The station produces/airs an annual Holiday themed one-hour program that features musical performances from area High School choirs and ensembles.

EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WSJV airs emergency weather information superimposed over programming during severe weather and interrupting programming with live announcements in life-threatening weather events.

WSJV is a member of the Indiana Broadcasters Association and was active in the creation of the Indiana state-wide Amber Alert program. The station airs the EAS triggered Amber Alerts as well as following up with live Amber announcements during the active cycle for both Indiana and Michigan.

WSJV also interrupts regular programming to bring local viewers breaking news that may affect them.

SUMMARY

WSJV produces 23.5 hours of news each week, is active and involved with community needs and events. All you have to do is call any one of the community partners mentioned earlier to get an ear full of all WSJV does for their project. Our three-hour weekday morning news is the venue for the local population to bring awareness to their causes. Additionally, WSJV managers and staff members serve on many non-profit boards and participate directly with various community-based projects. The South Bend-Elkhart television market is better place to live because of WSJV.

Kevin J. Sargent
WSJV Vice President & General Manager